

QUINTET

At the Armenian Carpet Shop

Home from a spring tour in Turkey,
visions of lapis and gold,
Izmir and Ankara
minarets and carpets. I bought one in Cappadocia,
they told me I had been given a big discount
and that the graceful local girls
doing the intricate loom-work were
being paid not to migrate to Ankara or Istanbul.

It was a beautiful bit of tapestry-- everyone said so--
really more of a tiny throw- piece all aqua and floral,
fringed in the Persian style—,
a splurge that would bring happiness. The owners
reminded me it was not just for me,
but to be passed on to my daughters and
any daughters they might have.

Such mercantile romantics-- I
delighted in carrying the carpet curled in my suitcase on
the flight back to New York and not
declaring it in customs because
the factory swore *it was UNESCO- certified*
and exempt from international duties.

This two- by- three foot silk on cotton rug radiated

some magical power lying in the living room
catching soft light of a north facing window, its woven threads
refracting the hours, like the sea's surface as
any sunny day unfolded and yet

I was vaguely uneasy in that way we have,
that I'd paid too much, not wanting to be
a naïve American sucker- tourist, so
I finally took the thing to a local carpet store
owned and run by Armenians
they immediately declared I had indeed bought a
treasure, the younger woman in the shop took
photographs in case they could find a *companion*, oh

but I had *paid* too much, and a silver haired woman,
mother of the first, emerged from the back of the shop
took one look and said, *You know, there's something about
Turkey, people come back so happy and they've paid too much.
Those Turks ply you with tea and sales pressure, you are visiting
royalty, she, had nothing against Turks really,*
although she had lost much family to them 99 years before.

She knew, in the 50's, a young student whom she'd
taken to the top of Riverside Church and he seemed so kind
and oddly a little ashamed, she was not sure why--
she guessed he sensed she was Armenian but it
never came up really or if it did it was simply by way
of introduction, as they looked out over the Hudson
he surprised her declaring, *I love my country but
we Turks, all of us have black hearts.*

KAIROS CHOIR CONCERT: Mother's Day, 2013

Kairos (καιρός) is an [ancient Greek](#) word meaning the right or opportune moment (the supreme moment).

It was about springlight, and history, and treason,

a choir singing

Early Music for this day of Ave Maria's and *a capella*

Kairos madrigaled and chanted before us, my wife and

good friends, clerics of the church, in the church, St George's

where they preached once, with the crystal chandelier right above

As we sat hypnotized, under the prism of every May's sun light

through Tiffany stained glass martyrs, light and song hypnotized,

The river wind blessed the seated congregation

warmed with radiant energy, radiant song

and I sitting there studying each singer

One soprano at the extreme left, her

Voice reaching softly high above the rest

seized me, she

Was so intent, so much younger than

the rest and I caught her eyes an instant only,

to be released for soaring song, Medieval,

And I saw in her, Madonna but more
an apparition, my young wife Katy, another wife--
earlier, 1977, *Katy who fled*, leaving

Desolation, then-- but not now, only
beauty, chansons in front of the altar
this man falling in love yet again holding

The hand of the gentle wife-of-now, but in love with
this chanteuse of *Bonjour Mon Coeur* and
stunned by the sweet minute's infidelity,
'*Fidelis*'

Came the swell of polyphony,
for this poor historian, captive to this living singing being,
He, congregant once of this consecrated place where

His daughters once lit candles, acolytes for
morning services and song and then
those twenty Mays ago,

Danced in the green wind
on the front courtyard
converted to a Sunday strawberry festival, like

Some little fifteenth century whimsy

**but with cars parked on the street
as they are today for this**

Impossible conflation

Blameless deception, the

Kairos amens again in perfect harmony

Lielupe Riverbank July 2013

The Zemgale sun slants warmest today at
seven in the evening, brushing across green
not-ready wheatfields, they shimmer against
black backgrounded trees, the light

surges across the gentle oscillation of the stalks
each lit its incandescent instant through
our eyelenses, it
is impossible to move just now.

Black swallows swoop in arcing glide high
above this landscape cut by its meandering
Lielupe/big river, not so big really, we can
find a small sand clearing at the banks

Water's down, a few bathers sun or venture
down to the edge heavy and shallow this year
with canary grass grown high and ignited
by this same day's seven twenty sun
and water lilies, *Nymphaeaceae*, thick
with flowers pink and white and sometimes yellow,

The river weeds under a foot or two of water
will slow you down, caress your legs, ensnare
and likely leave you with a bit of a river rash later
that evening, the price for seeing giant minnows

in the shallows engorged in aquatic feast,

**We find a tall grassed patch partly shaded by willow
and by seven thirty are sunbathing with honey schnapps
and black bread and-- yes festive caviar
and now the sweet conceit of imagining Tolstoy
not really so long dead, doing the same as we, simply at his dacha
streams not really so far away at Yana Polanya, across the
Russian border.**

Sudanese Boy Adopted by Putnam County Couple

This being October

The wine-sap light drawn across

City, River, Palisades

I think I will tell

young Samir

about Pumpkins,

Chistian has never seen these

Vegetable suns,

His life has advanced to date

utterly unimpeded by their absence,

Yet he has missed something---

not giraffe sized ferns

not papayas

shouting markets nor

bathing in great puddles

by the roadside's edge

in the unending summer

of that former life,

He knows little of cold,

less of Indian corn

of frost,

of aster stippled fields

and owls

and hurrying

and pumpkins.

GYRE

A circular or spiral motion or form, especially a circular ocean current. *Webster*

If I were marooned on a desert island and had to subsist on just one word
it might be *gyre*

It would have to be a lot of gyre because, you see

Scientists think it might be like the string theory strings of language.

g-y-r-e:

Fibonacci

1, 2, 3, 5, 8, 13, 21, 34

Fibonacci sunflowers

with seeds spiraling

dancing glinting these topaz tesserae

vibrate August fields, set Van Gogh to weeping,

green sea spirals deep below-- oh see we've reached thirteen—time to stop

We are two figure skaters you and I

we spin in careful concentricity across the ice,

Icelandic crowds howl our eye-locked spinning with delight

in this incandescent amphitheater tonight

high high up pale green aurora strands unfold

we gyre.

I sing the circus electric

The gyring ferris wheel and the hemlocks

that shade the entrance to the big tent.
This nymphet on the flying trapeze
sails through the thick air above the sea
of eyes upturned in sweaty faces
is Not thinking the only emperor is the
emperor of Ice Cream, not of mimsy borogoves,
not of worlds ending in gyre and ice,
only of reaching his sequined arms
outstretched for her, high under the Big Top.